

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Thursday, November 5, 2015
Mansfield Town Hall
Town Council Chambers**

4:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Steve Bacon, Tom Callahan, Mona Friedland, Matt Hart, Riley Hasson, George Jones, June Krisch, Paul McCarthy, Toni Moran, Diana Pelletier, Steve Rogers, Paul Shapiro, and Bill Simpson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Board Vice President Steve Bacon called the meeting to order in President Philip Lodewick's absence, at 4:03 pm.

Mr. Bacon said he spoke with new Board member Bonnie Kumiega last week and she, unfortunately, had a conflict and could not attend today's meeting. Ms. Kumiega is an attorney with Updike, Kelly & Spellacy which has an office at the Holiday Mall in Mansfield. She is the chair of the Mansfield Business and Professional Association which gives Ms. Kumiega an ex-officio position on the Board.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of July 2, 2015 and October 1, 2015

Bill Simpson made a motion to approve the minutes of July 2, 2015. Paul Shapiro seconded the motion. Riley Hasson abstained. The motion was approved with one abstention.

Matt Hart made a motion to approve the October 1, 2015 minutes. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Tom Callahan, June Krisch, and Toni Moran abstained. The motion was approved with the abstentions.

4. Executive Director Report

Cynthia van Zelm provided an update on the new businesses noting that BLISS Boutique should open in a few weeks and Gansett Wraps in December. She said Leyland Alliance has also signed a lease with Blaze Pizza and Leyland sent a press release to this effect yesterday. Ms. van Zelm said Educational Playcare should open shortly.

Paul Shapiro asked about the brew pub idea. Ms. van Zelm said the idea of allowing a brew pub in Mansfield has been discussed by the Economic Development Commission and was favorably recommended to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The next step for the Commission is to have its Regulatory Review Committee review the concept of allowing brew pubs in Mansfield.

The Board discussed the large number of restaurants in Storrs Center and the overall trend of a decline in retail stores and the difficulty of attracting them to Storrs Center. The Board asked Ms. van Zelm to invite master developer LeylandAlliance and its retail leasing consultant Charter Realty Development to the next Board meeting to review their leasing efforts and strategy.

The Board suggested a separate meeting with the representative of the new owners of the built commercial property, Hart Realty Advisers, and its property manager The Wilder Company.

Ms. van Zelm said 27 homes are sold out of the 42 available in Main Street Homes. She said there will be an open house in a few weeks.

Ms. van Zelm said she is working with a small team to bring movies to the Town Square this coming summer.

Ms. van Zelm said she has received two responses thus far for a consultant for the Partnership's strategic plan. She said the deadline is tomorrow. Interviews are tentatively set up for November 30 and December 1.

In response to a question from Mr. Bacon, Ms. van Zelm said the parking situation is the parking garage is much improved as residents moved above the gate.

5. Storrs Center Action Items – Phase 2 Public Spaces Plan

Mr. Bacon said he and Ms. van Zelm met with Lou Marquet with Leyland, and UConn Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture Kristin Schwab about the public spaces in Phase 2. Ms. Schwab expressed interest in working on a plan.

In 2012, Ms. Schwab, with two of her students, had conducted a study of the public spaces downtown including UConn and Town property.

Mr. Bacon said the feeling was that there were many opportunities to improve on some of the courtyard and alley areas in the Wilbur Cross Way area. Mr. Bacon said the discussion with Ms. Schwab also included the Post Office wall near the Post Office parking area, and the parking garage.

Ms. Moran suggested that the scope include the urban trail/wayfinding signage concept that Ms. Schwab had raised in the 2012 plan.

Ms. van Zelm reported that Mr. Marquet committed to \$2,000 from Leyland and EdR based on a previous commitment for pavers in the courtyard between 34 Wilbur Cross Way and 40 Wilbur Cross Way.

Ms. Moran moved to approve the development of a plan for public spaces in Storrs Center, and authorize up to \$3,000 of the previously authorized \$4,500 for decorative concrete in the courtyard between 34 Wilbur Cross Way and 40 Wilbur Cross Way, to be used for such plan. Diana Pelletier seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Report from Committees

Advertising and Promotion

Chair Moran said the Pup Crawl was very successful with about 20 dogs participating. There were dog owners participating from Massachusetts. Advertising through Walktober likely helped to reach a larger audience. There is interest in possibly holding another dog walk in the spring. Mr. Moran recognized Dr. Todd Friedland for participating and offering tips on dealing with dogs and ticks.

Ms. Moran said the Winter Fun Week event will be discontinued next year. The event was largely geared toward advertising various activities during the first week in February to attract people downtown when business might be slow. There were not as many participants as in the past.

There will be an increase in activities for Winter Welcome which is December 5 from 1 pm to 5 pm. Santa will arrive at the UConn Co-op at Storrs Center; there will be ice sculptures; and singing on the Town Square, among other activities.

Ms. Moran said Halloween was very successful with the most trick or treaters yet – estimated to be 350 or so. The EO Smith HS drum line and the Mansfield Academy of Dance also participated.

Ms. van Zelm said the Festival Committee held a debrief and concurred that having two stages worked well. There was also some preliminary discussion of having food trucks as part of the mix of food options.

Business Development and Retention

Chair Steve Rogers said he and Storrs Automotive owner Rene Schein volunteered to visit new businesses.

Finance and Administration

Chair Tom Callahan said the Committee held a joint meeting with the Membership Development Committee. They talked about the Partnership's strategic planning effort and the need to look at funding options including a review of how Partnership membership may be structured going forward.

Mr. Callahan referred to the September 30, 2015 financials. He said there was nothing major to report on the financials.

Mr. Callahan then referred to the accounting for the funding of the Town Square. He said as of September 20, 2015, \$1.25 million has been spent with revenues due to the Town of approximately \$96,000. This would leave the account with approximately \$59,000. The Finance Committee has suggested that the funds be used for Town Square equipment, capital needs, and events.

Mr. Rogers noted that most of the funding to be received yet is the \$3 million abatement fund., and asked for clarification. Mr. Hart reviewed the abatement – The Town agreed to provide an abatement of \$3 million to the developer which is for public infrastructure in Storrs Center. He said that the Storrs Road and Dog Lane grants needs to be closed out and that is why there has not been a 2nd request to Storrs Center Alliance and EdR for the balance in the abatement fund yet.

Membership Development

Chair George Jones said the Committee will continue its typical membership recruitment process until the strategic planning process is completed.

Planning and Design

Chair Steve Bacon said the Committee did not meet in October. He said that Lou Marquet with LeylandAlliance will be presenting the preliminary Sustainability Guidelines checklist for Main Street Homes at the November meeting.

7. Other

Mr. Hart said there will be a public reception for Betsy Paterson on Friday, December 4 from 4 pm to 6 pm in the Community Center.

8. Adjourn

June Krisch made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 5 pm.

Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.